





SCHILLER'S
SONG OF THE BELL.



From her mother
New Year 1875

Johann Christoph Friedrich von

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SONG OF THE BELL.

TRANSLATED BY W. H. FURNESS.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

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VIVOS VOCO. MORTUOS PLANGO. FULGURA
FRANGO.

In the earth, now firmly planted,
Stands the mould of well-burnt clay.
Come! my lads, your strength is wanted,
We must make the bell to-day!
From the heated brow,
Sweat must freely flow,
So the work the master showeth;
Yet the blessing, Heaven bestoweth.

The work, we earnestly are doing
Befitteth well an earnest word;
Then Toil goes on, more cheerily flowing,
When good discourse is also heard.

So let us then with care now ponder
What our weak strength originates!
To him no reverence can we render,
Who never plans what he creates.
'Tis this indeed that man most graceth,
For this 'tishis to understand,
That in his inner heart he traceth,
What he produces with his hand.

Take the wood, from pine trunks riven,
Dry it must be through and* through,
That the flame, straight inward driven,
Fiercely strike into the flue!

Let the copper brew!

Quick the tin in, too!

That the tough bell-metal going,
Through the mould be rightly flowing.

What in the pit, by help of fire,
The hand of man is forming thus,
High in the belfry of the spire,



There will it tell aloud of us.
Still will it last while years are rolling,
And many an ear by it be stirred,
With all the mourner's woes condoling,
And with Devotion's choir accord.
Whate'er this changing life is bringing,
Here down beneath, to Earth's frail son,
Strikes on the metal crown, which, ringing,
Will monitory sound it on.

Bubbles white I see appearing;
Good! the mass is melted now.
Throw in salts, the fluid clearing,
They will help it quick to flow.
Clean too from the scum
Must the mixture come,
That in metal pure abounding,
Pure and full the bell be sounding.

For, with Joy's festal music ringing,
It welcomes the beloved child,

Upon his life's first walk, beginning,
Wrapt in the arms of Slumber mild:
For him yet rest in Time's dark bosom
Funereal wreath and joyous blossom;
A mother's tender cares adorning,
With watchful love, his golden morning, —
The years, — they fly like arrows fleet.
The maiden's plays the proud boy scorneth,
He rushes forth, the world to roam
With pilgrim's staff; at last returneth,
A stranger in his father's home.
And glorious, in her youthful splendor,
Like creature come from Heaven's height,
With cheeks all mantling, modest, tender,
The maiden stands before his sight.
A nameless longing then is waking
In the youth's heart; he strolls alone;
The tears from out his eyes are breaking;
Joy in his brothers' sports is gone.
He blushes as her steps he traces,
Her greeting smile his heart elates,



For fairest flowers the fields he searches,
Wherewith his love he decorates.
O tender Longing! Hope how thrilling!
The golden time of young first Love,
The eye beholds all heav'n unveiling,
Revels the heart in bliss above!
Oh that, forever fresh and vernal,
First love's sweet season were eternal!

See how brown the pipes are getting!
This little rod, I dip it in,
If it show a glazed coating,
Then the casting may begin.
Now, my lads, enough!
Prove me now the stuff,
The brittle with the soft combining,
See if they be rightly joining.

For when the Strong and Mild are
pairing,
The Manly with the Tender sharing,
The chord will then be good and strong.

See ye, who join in endless union.
That heart with heart be in communion!
For Fancy's brief, Repentance long.
Lovely round the bride's locks clinging,
Plays the virgin coronal,
When the merry church-bells ringing
Summon to the festival.
Ah! the hour of life most festal
Ends the May of Life also,
With the veil, the girdle vestal
Breaks the lovely charm in two.
For Passion will fly,
But Love is enduring,
The flower must die,
Fruit is maturing.
The man must be out
In hostile life striving,
Be toiling and thriving, '
And planting, obtaining,
Devising and gaining,
And daring, enduring,



So fortune securing;
Then riches flow in, all untold in their mea-
sure,
And filled is the garner with costliest treasure;
The store-rooms increase, the house sprea-
deth out,
And reigns there within
The chaste, gentle housewife,
The mother of children,
And wise and sweetly
The house rules discreetly;
The maidens she traineth,
The boys she restraineth,
And work never lingers,
So busy her fingers,
Increasing the gains
With ordering pains,
And sweet-scented presses with wealth she
is filling,
And thread round the swift humming spindle
is reeling,

And the neat burnished chests, — she ga-
thers them full
Of linen snow-white, and of glistening wool,
The gloss and the shine to the good she
adds ever,
And resteth never.

And the father with look elate,
From the high far-seeing gable
Surveys his blooming, broad estate,
Seeth his haystacks forest-like growing,
And the barns with their lofts o'erflowing,
And the granaries, bent with the blessing,
And the corn as it waves unceasing;
Boasting, with pride-lit face:
Firm, as the Earth's own base,
Gainst all misfortune's strength,
Standeth my house at length!
Yet with mighty Fate supernal,
Man can weave no bond eternal,
And Misfortune strideth fast.



Be the casting now beginning;
Finely jagged is the grain.
But before we set it running,
Let us breathe a pious strain!
 Now knock out the tap!
 God forbid mishap!
Through the bending cannons hollow
Smoking shoots the fire brown billow.

Beneficent the might of Flame,
When man keeps watch and makes it tame.
In what he fashions, what he makes,
Help from Heaven's force he takes.
But fearful is this force of Heaven,
When, having all its fetters riven,
It bursts forth, its own law to be,
Thy daughter, Nature, wild and free?
Wo! when once emancipated,
With nought her power to withstand,
Through the streets thick populated
High she waves her monstrous brand!

By the elements is hated
What is formed by mortal hand.
From the heavens
Blessing gushes,
The shower rushes;
From the heavens, all alike,
Lightnings strike!
Hark! the droning from the spire!
That is fire!
Red as blood
Heav'n is flushing;
That is not the daylight's flood!
What a rushing
Streets along!
Smoke rolls on!
The fire column, flickering, flowing,
Through the long streets swiftly growing,
With the wind is onward going;
As from out a furnace flashing,
Glow the air, and beams are crashing,
Pillars tumble, windows creaking,



Mothers fleeing, children shrieking,
Cattle moaning
Wounded, groaning,
All is running, saving, flying,
Light as day the night is shining.
Through the chain of hands, all vying,
Swiftly flying,
Goes the bucket! bow-like bending,
Spouts the water, high ascending.
Howling comes the blast, befriending
The flame it roaring seeks and fans,
Crackling 'midst the well-dried grains,
Seizing in the granary chambers
On the dry wood of the timbers,
And, as if it would, in blowing,
Tear the huge bulk of the world
With it, in its flight, uphurled,
Mounts the flame to heaven, growing
Giant tall!
Hopeless all,
Man to God at last hath yielded,

Idly sees what he hath builded,
Wondering! to destruction going.

All burnt out
Are the places,
Where the tempest wild reposes.
In the vacant windows dreary,
Horror's sitting,
And the clouds of heaven, flitting
High, look in.

Ere he goes,
On the ashes,
Where his riches
Buried lie, one look man throws, —
His pilgrim's staff then gladly clutches.
Whate'er the fire from him hath torn,
One solace sweet is ever nearest,
The heads he counteth of his dearest,
And lo! not one dear head is gone.



In the earth it now reposes,
Happily the mould is full;
When our work the light discloses,
Will it pay our pains and skill?
Should the casting crack?
If the mould should break?
Ah! perhaps, while we are waiting,
Mischief is its work completing.

To holy Earth's dark, silent bosom
We our handiwork resign,
The husbandmen the seed consign,
And hope that it will swell and blossom
And bless the sower, by laws divine.
Still costlier seed, in sorrow bringing,
We hide within the lap of earth,
And hope that, from the coffin springing,
'T will bloom in brighter beauty forth.

From the belfry,
Deep and slow,

Tolls the funeral
Note of woe.
Sad and solemn, with its knell attending
Some new wanderer, his last journey wending.

Ah! the wife it is, the dear one;
Ah! it is the faithful mother,
Whom the angel dark is bearing
From the husband's arms endearing,
From the group of children far,
Whom she blooming to him bare;
Whom she on her faithful breast
Saw, with joy maternal, rest.
Ah! the household ties that bound her,
Are unloosed for evermore,
For pale shadows now surround her,
Who, the household, ruled o'er!
For her faithful guidance ceases,
No more keepeth watch her care,
In the void and orphaned places
Rules the stranger, loveless there.



Till the bell be cooled and hardened,
Let there rest from labor be;
And be each as free, unburdened,
As the bird upon the tree.

Once the stars appear,
From all duty clear,
Workmen hear the vespers ringing;
Still to Master care is clinging.

Joyous haste his bosom swelling,
In the wild and far-off greenwood,
Seeks the wanderer his dear dwelling.
Bleating, wind the sheep slow homeward,
And the kine too,
Sleek and broad-browed, slowly trooping,
Come in lowing,
To the stalls accustomed going.
Heavy in
Rocks the wagon,
Harvest laden.
Bright with flowers,

On sheafy towers
Garlands glance,
And the younger of the reapers
Seek the dance.
Street and market-place grow stiller;
Round the light, domestic, social,
Gather now the household inmates,
And the city gate shuts creaking.
Black bedighted
All the Earth is;
Rest the people unaffrighted
By the dark,
Which alarms the bad benighted;
For the eye of Law doth watch and mark.

Holy Order, rich in blessing,
Heaven's daughter, lightly pressing
Holds her law all ranks connected.
Mighty States hath she erected,
Calling from the wilds the savage
There to dwell, — no more to ravage,



Into human huts she goeth,
And all gentle customs showeth,
Weaving that dear tie around us,
Which to Fatherland hath bound us.

Busy hands, by thousands stirring,
In a cheerful league unite,
And it is in fiery motion
That all forces come to light.
Briskly work, by Freedom guarded,
Both the master and the men,
Each one in his place rewarded,
Scorning every scoffer then.
Labor is our decoration,
Work, the blessing, will command,
Kings are honored by their station,
Honors *us* the busy hand.

Gentle Concord,
Heavenly Peace,
Hover, hover,
Ever friendly o'er this place!

Never may that day be dawning
When the hordes of battle swarming
Through this silent vale are storming;
When the heavens,
Which, with evening blushing mildly,
Softly beam,
Shall with flames, consuming wildly
Towns and cities, fearful gleam!

Break me up the useless structure,
It has now fulfilled its part,
That the work, without a fracture,
Joy may give to eye and heart.

Swing the hammer, swing,
Till the case shall spring!
That the bell to light be given,
Be the mould in pieces riven.

The master wise alone is knowing
Just when the mould should broken be,
But wo! when, streams of fire flowing,
The glowing ore itself sets free!



Blind raging, with the crash of thunder,
It shivers the exploded house,
As if hell's jaws had yawned asunder,
Destruction far and wide it throws.
When brutal force is senseless storming,
There can no perfect work be forming;
When nations seek themselves to free,
There can no common welfare be.

Wo! if heaped up, the fire-tinder
The inmost heart of cities fill,
Their fetters rending all asunder,
The people work their own fierce will!
Then at the bell-ropes tuggeth Riot,
The bell howls forth a wailing sound,
Sacred to peace alone and quiet,
For blood it rings the signal round.

"Equality and Freedom", howling,
Rushes to arms the citizen,
And bloody-minded bands are prowling,
And streets and halls are filled with men;

Then women to hyaenas turning,
On bloody horrors feast and laugh,
And with the thirst of panthers burning,
The blood of hearts yet quivering quaff.
Nought sacred is there more for breaking
Are all the bands of pious Awe,
The good man's place the bad are taking,
And all the vices mock at law.
'Tis dangerous to rouse the lion,
And deadly is the tiger's tooth,
And yet the terriblest of terrors,
Is man himself devoid of ruth.
Alas! when to the ever blinded
The heavenly torch of Light is lent!
It guides him not, it can but kindle
Whole States in flames and ashes blent.

Joy to me now God hath given!
Look ye! like a golden star,
From the shell, all bright and even,
Comes the metal-kernel clear.



Bright from top to rim,
Like the sun's own beam.
E'en the 'scutcheon, formed completely,
Shows its maker worketh neatly.

Come all! come all!
My comrades, stand around and listen,
While solemnly our work we christen!
CONCORDIA we the bell will call.
To concord and to heartfelt adoration
Assembling here the loving congregation.

And this its office be henceforth,
Whereto the master gave it birth:
High, this low earthly being over,
Shall it, in heaven's cerulean tent,
The neighbour of the thunder, hover,
And border on the firmament.
And let it be a voice from Heaven,
Joined with the starry host afar,
By which high praise to God is given
And which lead on the crowned year.

Its metal mouth alone devoted
To sacred and eternal things,
And hourly, Time, still onward flying,
Shall touch it with its rapid wings.
To Destiny a tongue affording,
Heartless itself, befall what may,
It feels for none, yet shall its swinging
Attend upon life's changeful play.
And as away its music fadeth,
That strikes so grandly on the ear,
So may it teach that nought abideth.
That all things earthly disappear.

Now with strength the rope is lending,
Raise the Bell from out the ground,
In the atmosphere ascending,
Let it seek the realms of Sound!

Heave it, heave it, raise!

Now it moves, it sways:

Joy to us may it betoken,

PEACE, the first sound by it spoken.





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